

Merit System Increments - The Conservation Commission requests funding for merit system increases for the five general government positions in the agency.

Self Insurance Premium - The Conservation Commission requests funding to cover the increase in the self insurance premiums for the 2007-09 biennium.

Watershed Data Pilot Project - This funding request will continue the Watershed Data Pilot Project, and enhance the system based upon the results of the pilot project. In addition, 10 more conservation districts to the system in FY 2007-2009.

Cultural Resource Investigations - Where public dollars are being spent to achieve a public benefit on privately owned lands, and in the course of achieving that public benefit, cultural resources are impacted, the private landowner is currently liable for the costs of cultural resource investigations. This program would reimburse cooperating landowners for those expenses to help reduce a significant financial barrier to implementation of riparian and nonpoint improvement projects. This program would also represent the Commissions' effort to implement Executive Order 2005-05, improve understanding between tribal governments and private landowners as well as provide training to conservation district personnel regarding cultural resources.

Engineering Design & Federal Coordination - An installation backlog of 5,898 conservation practices currently exists in Washington State. Land managers throughout the state have contracted for these practices through the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other USDA conservation programs. A lack of needed available technical assistance and engineering services has led to this practice application backlog. The Technical Service Provider (TSP) program will provide the needed state funding to match the 50% contribution match needed to receive federal funding for conservation practice application additional technical assistance to be provided by conservation districts. The result will lead to accomplishments of natural resource conservation goals throughout the state. The funding request includes \$928,000 state matching funds, authorization to receive and expend the matching amount of federal funding (\$928,000) and the \$300,000 needed to support engineering technical services related to conservation district engineering assistance for conservation practice application.

Supporting Local Accountability - Financial support necessary to assure regular and timely audits of conservation district operations will be provided in fulfillment of statutory obligations of the State Conservation Commission and the State Auditor. Audits assure citizens their local conservation district is appropriately managing public funds and operating properly. Centralizing payment of local conservation district audits promotes efficiencies with the State Conservation Commission and State Auditor; lack of centralization would increase audit costs.

Continuing Capacity Building - This funding request will be used by the Conservation Commission to support critical infrastructure needs of local conservation districts. If appropriated, this money will help many rural districts meet locally identified goals aimed at achieving natural resource education, protection, enhancement, and restoration. Grants will be provided to conservation districts as authorized under RCW 89.08.410, and will be distributed based on identified need, ability to provide local leverage, or match and long-term capacity enhancement.

Comprehensive WQ Service Delivery - This package comprehensively addresses the natural resource needs of all types and sizes of privately owned land by combining the efforts on four important issues related to improving and then maintaining water quality on privately owned lands. This program better addresses local issues and increases efficiency of service delivery by allowing for one comprehensive program rather than four separate programs.

Puget Sound Partnership Plan Implementation - This package implements the recommendations of the Puget Sound Partnership, The Puget Sound Conservation and Recovery Plan, and the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound as they relate to improvement of habitat and water quality on privately owned lands. This program provides private landowners with technical, educational and project design assistance from the 12 Puget Sound Conservation districts to work with landowners proactively, voluntarily, and on a non-regulatory basis with issues including but not limited to: air quality issues, erosion, pesticide use, manure, water quality/quantity issues from the impacts of livestock, crop production, forest health, wildlife habitat concerns, energy consumption, and potential urban-rural interface conflicts.

Enhance Commission Capacity - The Conservation Commission has reached a high degree of efficiency and effectiveness, but there is a critical need for additional staff to meet the ever-increasing expectations. This request is for one-mid level FTE to coordinate policy development, rule development and implementation, as well as inter-agency and external outreach. The link that the Commission has through conservation districts to reach private landowners and involvement in critical and strategic natural resource decision making processes is essential in moving comprehensive policies forward, and at risk, without additional support

IT Agreements and Business Expenses - This funding request will be used by the Conservation Commission to support critical information technology infrastructure needs. The Conservation Commission is co-located with Ecology and relies primarily on Ecology for its essential information technology services. Software licenses, email hosting and web design/service have not been functions previously supported by Ecology and are required for the agency. This request will offset additional interagency service costs, software licenses which are the responsibility of the agency, and web design/hosting expenses.